

Mysterious Incident Has
Far-Reaching Effect on
One Domestic Situation.

THE SECOND COMING OF MRS. BAIN'S FIRST HUSBAND

BY IRVIN S. COBB
In The Star's Series of
American Fiction.

The Author:

Irvin S. Cobb

Irvin S. Cobb has been and done many things—newspaper man, war correspondent, author, playwright, etc.—there isn't space enough to enclose all the ground he has covered, but for the time he first began writing he has been claimed by his fellow countrymen in a way that seems to make him belong to his admirers individually. The author of *Teaching*—humorously, almost never fails to do just that. His serious side has added to his great place in our affections.

It has been said of him by his admirers that he is Davis: "In Cobb we find Mark Twain, Bret Harte and Edgar Allan Poe at their best," but to us who read him he is just himself, Irvin S. Cobb.

MARY STEWART CUTTING, JR.

For only Mrs. Thomas Bain had been content to compare Mr. Thomas Bain with men about him, he for counter-arguments, would not have been put at a serious disadvantage. Out of her ammunition locker he might have borrowed shells to fire in his own defense. Did she, for instance, cite the polished beauty of Mr. Stetson's drawing-room behavior, speaking with that subtle inflection which as good as said that his own society manners left much to be desired. Mr. Bain's rebuttal would have been prompt and ready. He would have spoken right up to point out the fact that So-and-so notoriously neglected his family, or that he drank entirely too much for his own good, or that habitually failed to pay his just debts. Mr. Bain was not a scoundrel, understand. Still, a man must fight back with such weapons as he may command.

But Mrs. Bain's method of attack was entirely too subtle for him. It left him practically speechless. Out in the world he was was competent to fend for himself. Beneath the domestic roof tree where his wife sat in judgment on him, his ways, his small shortcomings or his large faults, he completely was at a loss for proper rebuttal. It gave him such a helpless feeling! It would have given any normal man a helpless feeling. And Mr. Bain was in all essential regards a normal man—a good citizen, a good provider, and, as husband, an average, fair husband.

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There were even times when he almost permitted himself the wish that there never had been such things as second husbands, either. With the acute vividness of a war-scarred veteran remembering the first time he was shot, he could reconstruct the occasion when Mrs. Bain's former husband first came into his life. They had been married just two months then. The honeymoon was in its last quarter. If the couple were ever to go along together in harmony the time had now come when mutual understanding must succeed the period of adjustment and balance. She had the benefit of experience on her side; for she had been through the process once before. Tom Bain might be a green hand at this business of being married, but, subconsciously, he was beginning to adjust himself in his ordained and proper place in the matrimonial scheme as it related to him and this very charming lady. In other words, he had reached the place where he was slipping out of the bridegroom pose into the less studied and more matter-of-fact status of a husband. He was ready to quit a part and be his own self again always, though with regard for the limitations and restrictions imposed by the new estate upon which he had entered.

The campaign against him—we may as well call it a campaign—opened on the evening following their return from the trip to White Sulphur. That first day at his desk had been a hard one; so much which seemed to require his personal attention had accumulated while he was away. He left the office pretty well tired out. On his way home he built up a pleasant vision of a nice quiet



YOU ARE ASTONISHED? PERMIT ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. I AM MRS. BAIN'S FIRST HUSBAND."

little dinner and then a peaceful hour or so in the living room in slippers and an old smoking jacket.

Mrs. Bain met him at the door with a greeting that put him in thorough good humor. This, he decided, was the best of all possible worlds to live in and his, undoubtedly, was the best of all possible ways of living.

"You're late, dearest," she said. "You've just time to run upstairs and slip on your evening clothes. I've laid them out for you."

"Why, there's nobody coming in for dinner, is there?" he asked. She drew away from him slightly.

"No, there's no one coming," she said. "What difference does that make?"

"Well," he said, "I'm rather fagged out and I sort of thought that seeing there'd be only the two of us, I'd come to the table just as I am."

"Very well, dear," she said, "suit yourself."

But he took note that she had shortened the superlative "dearest" to "dear." Also she slipped herself out of the circle of his encircling arm.

She was thinking, too. Practically all women are popularly supposed to have intuition, and certainly this

bare trace—or an autumnal chill in the air.

"Suit yourself," she repeated.

But, as a newly married man, how could he suit himself? He clad himself in the starry shirt, the high-tight collar that pinched his throat, the pinchy patent leathers, and all the rest of the funeral regalia in which civilized man incases himself on any supposedly fatal occasions. She gave him an approving look when, ten minutes later, he presented himself before her.

"Tom," she said as they sat down. "I think you always should dress for dinner. Arthur always said that a gentleman should dress for dinner."

He stared at her, puzzled.

"Arthur?" he echoed. "Who's Arthur?"

"My first husband," she explained. "Arthur looked so well in his evening clothes."

"Oh," he said, like that. That was all he said for a minute or so. He was thinking.

She was thinking, too. Practically all women are popularly supposed to have intuition, and certainly this

particular woman had her share of it. Probably it was in that very moment of reflection that the lady decided on a future plan of action.

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At any rate, this was the beginning. Eventually Mr. Bain awoke to a realization that he was the victim of a gentle tyranny—that he had

done them part. But always there was Arthur tagging along, making a crowd of three of what otherwise might have been a congenial company of two.

But, as some one has most aptly said, it's always darkest just before the dawn. In this instance, though, deliverance came to the oppressed, not with the gradations of the spreading dawn, but rather with the solid emphasis of a bolt from the blue.

There had been an evening of bridge with the Tatums and Bain, who played well, had for a partner Mrs. Tatums, who didn't. It is barely possible that he had betrayed a passing emotion of testiness once or twice.

At midnight, as they were entering their house, Mrs. Bain renewed her remarks on a matter to which reference already had twice been made

on the way home in the cab.

"My dear," she was saying, "I really must repeat again that, to my way of thinking, no amount of exasperation could have justified you in showing your feelings as you did show them at least twice at that card table. Now, Arthur would never—"

At this instant Mr. Bain's finger found the push button just inside the jamb of the living room door and the lights flashed on. What next ensued—the vocal part of it, I mean—might have suggested to an eavesdropper had there been one, that the vowel sounds in their proper order were being repeated by two persons laboring under strong excitement.

"Eh?" That was his astounded ejaculation.

"E-e-e!" A shrill outcry, part scream, part squeal, from her.

"I—I—" Mr. Bain again.

"Oh!" Mrs. Bain's turn.

"You!" Her startled gasp of recognition.

"Yes, Evelyn, that's who it is. This in matter-of-fact tones, was a third voice speaking.

After this for a moment the spell made up of an affectation, if somewhat masterful, lady, and the memory of a dead and gone personality. Mrs. Bain's first husband was persistently dogging Mrs. Bain's second husband.

Daily, after one fashion or another, the latter was reminded of the late Arthur. Arthur, it seemed, had never lost his temper. What made the comparison hurt the more was the indubitable fact that Mr. Bain occasionally did lose his. Arthur had never raised his voice above the low-pitched key of innate refinement, no matter how irritated he might be. Arthur had been so tidy; never left his clothes lying about where he dropped them. Arthur had not given her a cross word in all the seven years of their life together. Arthur invariably had been so considerate of her feelings. It was Arthur this and it was Arthur that, she realized her power and she used it. Mrs. Bain's first husband was ever, so to speak, at the elbow of Mrs. Bain's second husband, by proxy chiding him, admonishing him, correcting him, scolding him, even.

And for all that he naturally was wary and uncertain, of a man. It had the voice of a man—a voice calm, assured, almost casual. It had the garb of a man, or at least it had the nebulous faint suggestion of garb. But it had no substance to it, none whatsoever. It had no definable color, either. It had rather the aspect of a figure of man done in lines of very thin smoke. You could look right through it and distinguish, as through a patch of haze, the pattern of the wallpaper behind it. And now, as it spoke again, you could, in some undefined sort of way, see its voice starting down in its chest and traveling on up and up and so out of its lips. It was no more than a patch of fog, modeled by some unearthly magic into vaporous semblance of a human form. It was inconceivable, impossible, an incredible figment of the imagination, and yet there it was.

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ITS second speech was addressed to Mr. Bain, who had frozen where he was, his finger still touching the pushbutton. His eyes enlarged to twice their size and his lower jaw sagged.

"You are astonished? Permit me to introduce myself. I am Arthur—Mrs. Bain's first husband. I am glad to meet you."

"Oh, Arthur!" Mrs. Bain, under attack, was reviving, was rallying to her own defense, as powers of coherent speech returned to her.

"Don't 'Oh, Arthur,' me," she snapped.

"But listen: And you, too, sir, if you will be so good. We quarreled frequently in those years of our married life. She complained of my brusque

ways, of my fits of irritability, of my refusal to like many of the people that she persisted in liking, of my tastes and my habits and inclinations. She didn't care for some of my friends; I didn't care for some of hers. I objected to any number of things about her—and rarely refrained from saying so. She has told you that between us there was never a cross word. Bah! There were tens of thousands of cross words. When we got on each other's nerves, which was often, neither of us hesitated to let it be known. When we disagreed over something—or anything—we argued it out. We loved each other, but merely loving did not make either of us angels. We quarreled and made up and quarreled some more. We fell out and we fell back together again. There were times when we were like a pair of cooling doves, and again there were times when the proverbial monkey and parrot had little, if anything, on us. In short, and in fine, sir, we behaved just as the average reasonably well married married couples do behave. And for my own sake, and incidentally for yours, sir, I would not have you believe differently.

"That, I believe, is practically all I had to say to you. Having said it, I wish to add a final word to our wife here. Evelyn, speaking with such authority as is befitting a first husband, I wish to state that, so far as my observations from another sphere have gone, your present husband is a first-rate fellow. I like to think of him as my successor. And I intend to see that he has a fair deal from you. I trust this visit from me has been a lesson to you. Hereafter, in your dealings with him you will please be so good as to stand on your own merits. You will kindly refrain from dragging me into your arguments as an advocate on your side. My stock of patience is no greater than it was before. Before I became a memory—remember that, I sincerely trust it will not be necessary for me to admonish you personally a second time. Because I warn you here and now that next time I shall return under circumstances that will be most embarrassing to you. Next time there will be no privacy about my appearance. I shall come to you in public. You'll be a talked-about woman, Evelyn. There'll be pieces about you in the paper, and spiritualists and trances and mediums and devils into the occult—a meddlesome, nosy lot, too. I may add—will make your life a burden for you. So have a care, Evelyn!"

"Sir, to you I extend my best wishes. I'm sorry we didn't meet before. But some of these days we'll make up for lost time—when you join me on the plane where I am at present residing. Well, I guess that will be about all. Oh, if you don't mind, I'll just disappear into air and float up the chimney—it's more convenient."

It was at this juncture that Mrs. Bain went off into a swoon. It also should be noted that even as he sprang to her side to revive her, Mr. Bain wore on his face a look of humanly bold solicitude and concern, as if he felt twirled in a dance measure.

Personally I do not believe in ghosts. I assume, readers, that you do not believe in ghosts, either. But Mrs. Bain does, and as for Mr. Bain, he does, too, firmly—and, as a happily married man, he is every day renewing and strengthening his belief in them.

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PROPINQUITY

BY J. A. WALDRON



"AS THE TRAIN SPED THE GIRL CAUGHT HOLD OF JOY'S COAT."

ARMADUKE JOY looked at his watch. "Jeffards is late," he remarked to Raimond, his valet, who had just assisted him into a top-coat that proclaimed the ultimate in such garments.

Jeffards was Joy's chauffeur. "Yes, sir. It never has happened before," the valet replied. "Pardon me! I'll look out." And he went to a broad window, from which the Plaza and a sweep of Central Park was visible. "Why, sir," he added, "there's not a motor in sight, sir, except, that is to say, a cab."

"Telephone the garage," Joy impatiently walked from door to window and back again, and repeated while the valet phoned.

"Jeffards is there, sir. Says he was about to call up. The sport car, he says, isn't yet back from the shop, and the limousine has some serious trouble that he can't locate, sir. And he says there's a general strike of cabmen, or he would have reported with a cab, sir."

"The devil! But I must get downtown!" Joy had stopped at the window. "Everybody seems to be going into the subway, and I'm ready to try anything once! Have my things out early, Raimond. I go to the opera tonight. And tell Jeffards he must positively have one of the cars or a cab downtown for me at three."

"Yes, sir. And the dinner?"

And Marmaduke Joy disappeared, humming an air that was by no means popular. He had a classic taste in music.

Exclusive in habit and contact, Joy crowded into the subway with a mingling of misgiving and disgust. But his view of a locality usually thronged with vehicles for hire had

been conclusive. There wasn't a cab in sight, as Raimond had told him.

AT FIRST Joy was disposed to sent tangent albow and carseles feet, but it was all novel, and he struck out for himself. The car into which he was forced by a burly person in uniform was packed. Joy managed to seize one of the rings that serve in places of straps and tried to steady himself. There were constant and exasperating collisions, and the odors were as new as they were welcome to him.

This young bachelor went to business by virtue of inherited habit. He lived a life of some gayety, he says, but it was all novel, and he would have relinquished his own. Her dress was of the sort worn by girls who have to earn a living—imitative of the attire of women who don't have to work. But it became her. On her head was a rakish confection that emphasized a profusion of blonde hair. Joy could see that the girl was very attractive. Her lips were red without aid, and her eyes—a charming feature—moved him to a thrill as she looked up in apology for luncheon, when there was a call on the phone for him personally.

It happened to be from police headquarters. Identifying Joy, the voice asked if he had lost anything, though nothing besides a large wallet containing various papers and a considerable sum of money, and bearing his name.

He was speculating, soon after noon, as to which of his downtown clubs he should favor with his presence for luncheon, when there was a call on the phone for him personally.

JOY to this moment Joy had not known he had been robbed. His heart went to his scarf. A pin of value as an antique and cherished as a family token was also missing. Joy woke up and began to ask questions.

"Yes," said the headquarters voice, "your pocket has been picked, as you call it. And we have the thief here; subway."

Please come right over."

A vision of the miniature Venus who had been coqueting with his imagination all morning became more distinct. Surely this dear little thing, who looked so innocent, who had smiled so engagingly at him with gratitude in her eyes, could not be the thief! Yet if it should be she! Strange things happen in New York, and imperative personal necessities arise. Some are driven to crime.

Yet Joy would not believe it! If they had her in custody, he would go bail for her. More than that, he would employ the best lawyer in town to defend her. He might even go beyond that!

Joy was trembling with nervousness as he entered headquarters. He happened to know the inspector who had the matter in charge. They shook hands.

"I should like to talk with you a bit," said Joy, very nervous, "before we—before I—"

"Oh, that can wait! I want you to see the prisoner, for possible identification."

There is something quite peremptory about police inspectors. They have a way that is definite, and Joy was not used to their arbitrary habit. With his heart in his mouth he followed the quick step of the inspector to the room where the pickpocket was in custody.

And there he saw the tough-looking fellow who had sat in front of him in the subway.

Joy rose the next morning at his usual time. "Telephone Jeffards," he said to Raimond, his valet, "that I shall not use either car this morning."

"Yes, sir," the valet, somewhat astonished, replied. "You are not going to use?"

"Oh, yes! But I'm going in the

BUST OF JUSTICE WENDELL PHILLIPS STAFFORD.

In Washington than in any other city of the country. Several of his models of famous statesmen are in statuary hall, in the Capitol, and in the National Museum.

MOSES A. WAINER-DYKAAR, SCULPTOR, AT WORK ON BUST OF THE LATE ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL.

Clark, Hudson Maxim, Gen. Squier and Prof. William H. Holmes.

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THE problem of the sculptor genera-